# CLAIMS

1) A method of wrapping orderly groups (4) of cigarettes (3) arranged, in each group (4), in a number of superimposed layers (5, 5a), of which an outer layer (5a) is narrower than the adjacent layer (5) and defines, in the relative group (4), at least one longitudinal lateral gap (7), the method comprising the steps of feeding each group (4) into a respective folding pocket (11), together with a sheet (21) of wrapping material which is folded into a U inside said folding pocket (11) and has a lateral portion (64) projecting from the folding pocket (11); clamping the group (4) inside said folding pocket (11), with the outer layer (5a) of the group facing outwards, by moving into a closed work position two end clamping members (32), each having an appendix (45) which engages a respective end of said longitudinal lateral gap (7) when the relative end clamping member (32) is moved into said closed work position; folding the lateral portion (64) of said sheet (21) of wrapping material about the group (4) and about the appendixes (45) of the end clamping members (32) to form a rectangular parallelepiped-shaped tubular wrapping (65) about said group (4); and extracting the end clamping members (32) from said tubular wrapping (65).

2) A method as claimed in Claim 1, wherein, inside said folding pocket (11), said sheet (21) of wrapping material is made taut by subjecting each said appendix (45) to thrust outwards of the folding pocket (11).

3) A method as claimed in Claim 2, wherein said thrust is elastic thrust.

4) A method as claimed in Claim 2, wherein said thrust is maintained while extracting the end clamping members (32) from said tubular wrapping (65).

5) A method as claimed in Claim 1, wherein said folding pocket (11) comprises two first lateral walls (25, 26) movable to and from a closed work position, in which said two first lateral walls (25, 26) are perpendicular to an end wall (24) of the folding pocket (11); said sheet (21) of wrapping material being folded into a U inside said folding pocket (11) by feeding the sheet (21) of wrapping material and the relative said group (4) into said folding pocket (11) by means of a feed pocket (10) having two second lateral walls (17), by inserting said feed pocket (10) inside said folding pocket (11) so that the ends of said second lateral walls (17) substantially contact said end wall (24), and by moving said first lateral walls (25, 26) into said closed work position contacting said second lateral walls (17).

6) A method as claimed in Claim 5, wherein said tubular wrapping (65) is formed by folding said lateral portion (64) of said sheet (21) of wrapping material first about said appendixes (45) onto said outer layer (5a), and then about an edge of one (25) of said first lateral walls (25, 26), and by clamping an end portion of said lateral portion (64) onto an outer surface of said first lateral wall (25).

7) A method as claimed in Claim 6, wherein said end portion of said lateral portion (64) is clamped onto the outer surface of said first lateral wall (25) by a jaw (27) carried by said folding pocket (11) outwards of said first lateral wall (25).